

7.3 1906 Marion St Sensation

An event occurred in 1906 which although it did not involve John, took place at his house. The newspapers labeled it the "*Marion Street Sensation*"¹

Sam Gilmer had taken the short walk from the Royal Oak to Marion Street to take John, now 83 years old, for a walk but he had already gone out. As Sam was talking to Mrs. Woodward at the door a man came up the path, burst his way in, and assaulted Sam with a chisel. A struggle occurred and a neighbour came to Sam's aid. They wrestled the man to the ground and the police were called.

The man Francis Gordon Waddell a ship's fireman, recently discharged from the SS Manoroa, was charged with assault. Both Sam and Mrs. Woodward gave evidence at the hearing. Mrs. Woodward was described by the Freelance²:

"Mrs. Woodward, who is a housekeeper to Mr. Hamilton, in whose house the tussle ensued in which Waddell is charged as the aggressor, was probably as calm a witness as the witness box has seen for some time. She wore a well fitting, tailor made costume of grey, a collar, red tie and white silk gloves and showed no nervousness not even when she alleged Waddell had held a chisel over her head and made threats."

At the conclusion of the hearing Waddell was committed to trial in the Supreme Court on the charge of assault with intent. He was found guilty and sentenced to 19 months imprisonment with hard labour³.

¹ Evening Post 19 March 1906

² The Freelance 24 March 1906

³ Evening Post 15 May 1906